

Application No.: 10/657,682

Amendment dated: February 24, 2006

Reply to Office Action of: August 25, 2005

**REMARKS/ARGUMENTS**

Bennington (United States Patent No. 3,958,571) discloses a swab applicator which comprises an elongated hollow tube open at one end, normally closed at the opposite end, and containing a solution. A swab of absorbent material is secured around the open end, and the opposite end is provided with means to open the end to permit the solution to flow by gravity into the swab. In one embodiment, the opening means is a “declevity” which allows the tube to be easily broken at the “declevity.”

Applicant’s invention is an applicator comprising a hollow elongated tubular handle with a sealed end and an open end. An applicator tip is affixed to one end of the hollow elongated tubular handle. No liquid is enclosed in the hollow elongated tubular handle. In addition, no opening means is provided in the elected species. The applicator may be used to apply small quantity of liquid without absorption and retention of excess amount of the liquid into the hollow elongated tubular handle through the open end by placing the applicator tip in contact with a liquid. In the nonelected species of applicant’s invention, an opening means in the form of a score line is provided. Since in the examiner’s election/restrictions requirement in the first office action of June 23, 2005, the examiner deemed the nonelected species “patentably distinct species of the claimed invention,” the elected species is therefore “patentably distinct” from Bennington.

Applicant hereby submits that the claim rejections under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) have all been overcome. Applicant respectfully requests that a timely Notice of Allowance be issued in this case.

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Respectfully submitted,



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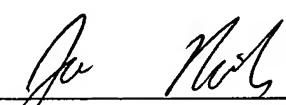
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